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CITY REFORMATION,

PRESCRIBED AND DEMANDED

BY THE

HOLY BIBLE.

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OR

A RICH SELECTION OF SOLEMN AND WEIGHTY SCRIPTURES, ESPECIALLY AGAINST THOSE SINS AND VICES, WHICH ARE FORBIDDEN BY THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT, AND BY OTHER CORRESPONDENT PRECEPTS OF GOD'S WORD.

The whole being Arranged in Fourteen Sections,

AND THE SEVERAL BOOKS, CHAPTERS AND VERSES, PARTICULARLY NOTED, THAT EVERY TEXT MAY BE EASILY FOUND AND EXAMINED WITH THE VERSES IN THE CONNECTION.

Prepared and published by a number of Christian Friends.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." - *Psal. xix. 7.*
"Take—the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." *Eph. vi. 17.*

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CITY REFORMATION

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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION. *Wise and faithful sayings for youth and others, calculated, with a divine blessing, to make them virtuous, honourable, useful, and happy in this world, and to fit them for the employments and happiness of heaven.*

Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. Ps. cxix. 9.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2 Tim. iii. 16.

A wise man will hear and will increase learning, and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels. Prov. i. 5.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Prov. i. 7. Prov. ix. 10. Ps. cxi. 10. Job xxviii. 28.

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. Prov. viii. 13.

Dost thou not fear God? Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man; for God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. Luke xxiii. 40. Eccl. xiii. 13, 14.

How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? Gen. xxxix. 9.

My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not—My son, walk not thou in the way with them, for their feet run to evil and make haste to shed blood.—Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. Prov. i. 10, 15, 16.

Cease, my son, to hear the instruction which causeth to err from the words of knowledge. Prov. xix. 27.

The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just. Prov. iii. 33.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor

sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. Ps. i. 1.

What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Mark viii. 36, 37.

Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?—He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, thou hast answered right. This do and thou shalt live. Luke x. 25—28.

What saith the scripture?—Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Rom. iv. 3. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all.) It is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. Acts x. 36 & 43. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. 1 Tim. i. 15. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts iv. 12. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. John iii. 36.

I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Matt. ix. 13. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Luke xiii. 5. Repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations. Luke xxiv. 47. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. Acts iii. 19. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. Mat. iii. 8.

What doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. Micah vi. 8. Swear not—lest ye come into condemnation. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. James v. 12. Exod. xx. 7.

Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: Cease to do evil; learn to do well. Isai. i. 16, 17.

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near; Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon. Isai. lv. 6, 7.

God, be merciful to me a sinner. Luke xviii. 13.

I say unto all, watch. Mark xiii. 37.

SECTION 2. *Divine commands and warnings, against particular sins and abominations which abound in certain cities, villages, and seaports.*

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

[This is one of the ten Commandments which were written on tables of stone, on mount Sinai. It is found in Exod. xx. 14. Deut. v. 18. Mat. v. 27. Rom. xiii. 9.]

Do not commit adultery. Mark x. 19. Luke xviii. 20. James ii. 11.

The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul; Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall tell you the same thing by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Acts xv. 23, 25, 28, 29.

For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles (or Heathens) which know not God. 1 Thes. iv. 3, 4, 5.

Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Tim. ii. 22.

Flee fornication. 1 Cor. vi. 18.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience. Put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another. Col. iii. 5, 6, 8.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour. But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let them not be once named among you, as becometh saints—but rather giving of thanks.

Be not ye, therefore, partakers with them—proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. Eph. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12.

Do not prostitute thy daughter to cause her to be a whore, lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness. Levit. xix.

Neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. 1 Tim. 5. 22.

SECTION 3. Continuance in these sins is inconsistent with the christian character.

To the Corinthian christians, Paul wrote thus,

Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. 1 Cor. vi. 13, 14, 15. See also Eph. v. as quoted in Section 2; and 1 Cor. v. Jer. vii, 9, 10, 11,

SECTION 4. *The source of these sins, and their intimate connexion with other sins.*

Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies ; These are the things which defile a man. Mat. xv. 19, 20.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful :—Who knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit such things are worthy of death,) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. Rom. i. 28—32.

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. 1 Tim. i. 9, 10.

By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood, therefore shall the land mourn. Hos. iv. 2, 3.

That profane swearing, and the other sins mentioned in this Section, as also intemperate drinking, do abound together, and promote each other, is an evident and lamentable truth.

SECTION 5. *The great God is a witness against all who commit these sins.*

The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously ; yet is she the wife of thy covenant. Mal. ii. 14.

And I will come near to you to judgment ; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his

right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts. Mal. iii. 5.

And the Lord said, because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous. Gen. xviii. 20.

How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods. When I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. Jer. v. 7.

SECTION 6. *The scripture shows God's displeasure, abhorrence and wrath, against these sins.*

This is evident from some of the laws written by Moses, at God's command.

There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor Sodomite of the sons of Israel.

Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow, for even both of these are an abomination unto the Lord thy God. Deut. xxiii. 17, 18.

This is evident from threatenings in the Old Testament and in the New.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Rom. i. 18. [See the same chapter, 29 and following verses.]

The adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them. Lev. xx. 10, 11.

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Heb. xiii. 4.

This is evident from the fact, that the abominable sin of idolatry, and especially when committed in a land favoured with the Holy Scriptures, is often mentioned in figurative language, by which it is compared to these sins. Isaiah xxiii. 17. 2 Chron. xxi. 11. Ezek. xvi. Rev. xiv. 8. xix. 2. Jer. v. 9.

SECTION 7. *Temporal judgments and punishments have overtaken individuals and communities on account of these sins: and unless prevented by reformation, tem-*

poral judgments and punishments of some kind may be expected to come on the guilty.

This is an heinous crime—It is an iniquity to be punished by the Judges. Job xxxi. 11.

The people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel was joined unto Baal-peor, and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. And the LORD said unto Moses, take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor. Num. xxv. 4, 5.

Neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed, and died in one day three and twenty thousand. Now all these things happened for ensamples, and they were written for our admonition. 1 Cor. x. 8.

The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly. Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities. Gen. xiii. 13. Jude 7. Gen. xix. 24, 25.

SECTION 8. *These sins are injurious and ruinous to the soul.*

Whoredom and wine, and new wine, take away the heart. Hos. iv. 11.

Whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding; he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. Prov. vi.

SECTION 9. *These sins unrepented of, exclude the guilty from heaven.*

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, hatred, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you

in time past, that they which do such things shall no inherit the kingdom of God. Gal. v. 19, 20.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Eph. v. 5.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. Rev. xxii. 15.

SECTION 10. *A Scriptural View of these sins with reference to the future and final judgment; and as they expose the guilty to eternal punishment.*

Through covetousness shall they with feigned words, make merchandise of you, whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

For if God spared not the angels which sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world that sinned, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample to those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished; but chiefly them that walk

after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. 2 Pet. ii. 3—10.

Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Likewise also these filthy dreamers, defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.—These speak evil of what they know not: but what they know naturally as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

Wo unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, and run greedily after the error of Balaam, for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. And Enoch also the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts. Jude 7—16.

The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Rev. xxi. 8.

“I view’d the sinner’s lives before,

But here I learn their end.”

WATTS. Ps. lxxiii.

SECTION 11. Solemn and affectionate admonitions and entreaties, especially to youth, to avoid these sins, and the snares and temptations which lead to them.

My son, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding: Yea, if thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy

voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom.

When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee; to deliver thee from the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger that flattereth with her words; which forsaketh the guide of her youth and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. Prov. ii. 1—6, 10, 11, 12, 16—18.

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief: For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. Prov. iv. 14—17.

For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honey comb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are ever moveable, that thou canst not know them.

Hear me now, therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth. Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel; Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth, and thy labours be in the house of a stranger, and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly. Prov. v. 3—14.

And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings. Prov. v. 20, 21.

For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life ; to keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.

Lust not after her beauty ; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by the means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread, and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt ? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt ? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife, whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. Prov. vi. 22—29.

A foolish woman is clamorous ; She sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their ways ; Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither, and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there ; and that her guests are in the depths of hell, Prov. ix. 13—18.

The mouth of strange women is a deep pit ; he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein. Prov. xxii. 14.

A whore is a deep ditch, and a strange woman is a narrow pit. She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men. Prov. xxiii. 27.

More bitter than death—the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hand as bands ; whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her ; but the sinner shall be taken by her. Eccl. vii. 26.

Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister, and call understanding thy kinswoman ; that they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger that flattereth with her words. Prov. vii. 4, 5.

For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries. Wherein they think it strange, that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you, who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. 1 Pet. 3, 4, 5.

SECTION 12. *A Scriptural View of a young man on the way to ruin by means of a vicious, artful, and ungodly woman; with some additional warnings to avoid the danger.*

For at the window of my house, I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths a young man void of understanding; passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, in the twilight in the evening, in the black and dark night: and behold there met him a woman, with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.

(She is loud and stubborn, her feet abide not in her house: Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.)

So she caught him and kissed him, and with an impudent face, said unto him, I have peace offerings with me, this day have I payed my vows, therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.

I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come let us take our fill of love until the morning, let us solace ourselves with loves; For the good man is not at home, he is gone a long journey. He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.

With her much fair speech she caused him to yield; with the flattering of her lips, she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.

Hearken unto me, therefore, O ye children, and attend unto the words of my mouth: Let not thy heart decline unto her ways, go not astray in her paths; for she hath cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. Prov. vii. 6—27.

SECTION 13. *To teach or lead others to commit these sins, is to oppose the pure doctrine of Christ; and follow the example of Balaam. Jezebel and others, whose character in scripture is marked with perpetual infamy.*

These things saith HE which hath the sharp sword with two edges, I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where satan's seat is, and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith.

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

So hast thou also them which hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. (The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, was directly contrary to the seventh commandment, and led to a correspondent wickedness of conduct.)

Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. Rev. ii. 12—16.

And Moses said unto them, have ye saved all the women alive? Behold these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord. Numb. xxxi. 15, 16.

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira, write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass. I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works, and the last to be more than the first.

Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.—And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am HE which searcheth the reins and hearts,

and I will give unto every one of you, according to your works. Rev. ii. 18—23.

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is divorced, committeth adultery.—Christ's Sermon on the Mount, Mat. x. 31, 32.

CONCLUSION.

SECTION 14. *Scripture examples of distinguished Reformers, and other scripture encouragements to engage in the great and good work of Reformation.*

ASA, KING OF JUDAH.

A single verse of this king's history informs us, that he made successful efforts to purify the land in which he reigned, of two great evils.

Asa did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. And he took away the Sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his father had made. 1 Kings, xv. 11, 12.

HEZEKIAH, KING OF JUDAH.

From the early part of this king's history, we are informed that much, very much, was accomplished in reforming the metropolis, and the nation, in the compass of two or three months; that the reformation began at the very commencement of his reign; that like charity, it began at home, and extended abroad; that the cooperation of priests, Levites, and princes, and the religious congregation in Jerusalem was blessed, as means of inducing many who belonged to the nation to humble themselves, turn from their heathenish and wicked practices unto the Lord, enter into his sanctuary, and engage in his service.

HEZEKIAH did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.—He in the first year of his reign, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them. Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day, they came to the porch of the house of the Lord, and on the sixteenth day, they

made an end. And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people, for the thing was done suddenly. 2 Chron. xxix. 1, 3, 17 & 36.

Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king, and the princes by the word of the Lord; And there assembled in Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread, a very great congregation. And they arose, and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron. (These altars had been built and used for idolatrous purposes.) 2 Chron. xxx. 12, 13, 14.

Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.

Be not ye stiff necked, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you; For the Lord your God is merciful and gracious, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

So the posts passed from city to city, through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, unto Zebulon; but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.

Nevertheless diverse of Asher, and Manasseh, and of Zebulon, humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.

And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced. So there was great joy in Jerusalem.

Then the priests and the Levites arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven. 2 Chron. xxx. 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 25, 26, 27.

Now when this was finished, all Israel that were present, went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and threw down the high places [which had been built for heathenish purposes,] out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim, also, and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. 2 Chron. xxxi. 1.

Abominations forbidden by the 7th commandment, were in ancient, as in modern times, connected with idolatrous worship

JOSIAH, KING OF JUDAH.

It is evident, that the reformation of abounding evils, effected by means of this excellent ruler and his associates, was commenced and pursued with a pious regard to the pure precepts of God's word; that the best interests of the people, and the glory of God, were ruling motives; and that success, was in consequence of solemn, public covenant engagements, faithfully fulfilled.

JOSIAH did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. And the king sent and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem; and the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah; and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their ears all the words of the covenant, which was found in the house of the Lord.

And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book.

And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem, and Benjamin, to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

And he brake down the houses of the Sodomites, that were by the house of the Lord. And he brake down the high places of the gates. And he brake in pieces the images. And JOSIAH took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel. 2 Kings xxii. 1, 2. xxiii. 1, 2, 3. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 29—33.

NEHEMIAH AND EZRA,

One a chief ruler in Jerusalem, the other a priest and a ready scribe of the law of the God of heaven, are signal examples of reforming a city from great evils, even where visible idolatry was not prevalent. The books which bear their names, show that they piously expected great things, and attempted great things; that the hand of God was upon them for good; that government favoured them; that pious Jews united and strengthened their hands to the good work.

'Then said I, unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire, come and let us build up the walls of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me, as also the king's words which he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build ; so they strengthened their hands for this good work.

EZRA the scribe, brought the book of the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

And Ezra the scribe, stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose—And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people.

And Ezra blessed the Lord the great God. And the Levites caused the people to understand the law. So they read in the book, in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading, All the people wept when they heard the words of the law.

And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. They read in the book of the law of their God, one fourth part of the day, and another fourth part they confessed and worshipped the Lord their God. Nehemiah ii. 17, 18, & viii. 2—8. & ix. 2, 3.

[The ninth and tenth chapters contain a public prayer, confession, and reforming covenant.]

Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away—At the evening sacrifice, I said, O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God, for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.—Since the days of our fathers, have we been in a great trespass unto this day.

We have forsaken thy commandments. And after all that is come upon us for our trespass and our evil deeds, seeing thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? Wouldest not thou be angry with us until thou hadst consumed us?

Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping, and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel, a very great congregation of men, and women, and children; for the people wept very sore.

Shechaniah said unto Ezra, we have trespassed against our God—Yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing—Let it be done according to the law—Arise, for this matter belongeth unto thee: We also will be with thee: Be of good courage, and do it.

And Ezra said, ye have transgressed, now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure.

Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do: We are many that have transgressed in this thing—Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come out at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us. Ezra, ix. 4, 10, 13, 14, & x. 1, 2, 4, 12, 13, 14.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

Not by might nor by power; but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel, thou shalt become a plain. Zech. iv. 6, 7.

He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. James v. 20.

There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth. Luke xv. 10.

“Thy word is everlasting truth,

“How pure is every page!

“That holy book shall guide our youth,

“And well support our age.” WATTS. Ps. 119

BOSTON, JUNE, 1823:

The following articles of information may be important to some into whose hands this pamphlet may come.

A new and improved edition of WILBER'S BIBLICAL CATECHISM, a work highly recommended, has lately been published, and is for sale at several Bookstores in this City. It has been found exceedingly useful in Schools and Bible Classes. The answers, nearly 200 in number, are in the very words of Scripture. It is worthy to be in every family, and might be a good companion and instructor to every seaman who desires to understand the holy Scriptures and to live according to their holy directions.

A great assortment of Religious Tracts, published by the Boston Evangelical Tract Society and by the New-England Tract Society, are deposited for sale at the Bookstore of Lincoln and Edmands, 53, Cornhill.

The Boston Auxiliary Tract Society has a deposit at the Store of Tyler and Clap, Broad-street.

Mr. Wilber's New-Testament, with Notes and a Key sheet, and Mr. Alger's Pronouncing Testament, have both been lately published in this City, and are highly recommended. They may be found at the principal Bookstores.

The late Dr. Worcester's "Christian Psalmody," has recently been re-published by S. T. Armstrong, No. 50, Cornhill. *Note.* This is the Collection used at the Seamen's Meeting, and at the Mission House, West Boston.

The following periodical Religious Publications are among the most useful for Seamen and others.

The Christian Herald and Seaman's Magazine. R. P. and C. Williams, Cornhill-Square, agents.

The Guardian. Richardson and Lord, No. 75, Cornhill. agents.

The Monitor. Cummings and Hilliard, No. 1, Cornhill, agents.

The Missionary Herald. S. T. Armstrong and Co. No. 50. Cornhill, agents.

Agents of Bible Societies who keep deposits.—Of the Massachusetts Bible Society, Edward Tuckerman, Esq. No. 4, Market-row. Of the Marine Bible Society, Rev. Wm. Jenks, 23, Pinkney-street, and E. Parker, Esq. 24, Central-wharf. Of the Female Bible Society, Mr. I. Bowers, 14, Newbury-street.

"Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

Daniel xii.

